

# Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2017

Saint Aloysius Religious Education  
Caldwell, NJ



## Thoughtful Moments

### St. Gabriel Possenti

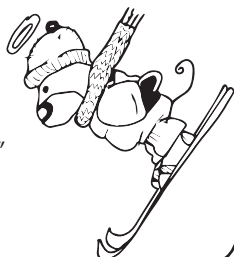
Francis Possenti was born in Assisi, Italy, into a large, prosperous family. A normal, cheerful teenager, Francis felt something was lacking in his life. At the age of 18, he gave up material comfort and joined the Passionists and was named Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows. He was known for his holiness and cheerful disposition. Six years later, he died of tuberculosis while studying for the priesthood. He is the patron of Catholic youth and seminarians.



### Just ask

Jesus tells us to ask God for what we need. Don't worry about pestering God. Think of how eager parents are to help their children—especially when their children are struggling with something. It's the same with God, who never tires of helping us.

*"If you then...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him"* (Matthew 7:11).



## Keeping kids Catholic

Many Catholic parents worry about children being tempted away from the faith. The good news is that children who grow up with a solid prayer life, regular Mass attendance and reception of the Sacraments are likely to stay Catholic. Try these suggestions:

### Instill confidence in prayer.

Youngsters who develop an early habit of turning to God in prayer, grow up to revere and lean on him. Show children how to pray and have age-appropriate prayer resources handy. Pray regularly as a family, and stay close to the greatest Catholic prayer – the Mass.

**Be clear about your own faith.** The most powerful catechesis we offer to our children is our own example. That means explaining our faith well, living it fully, and practicing it faithfully. If we teach faithfulness but

skip Mass without a good reason, avoid Confession, neglect our own spiritual growth, children receive mixed messages about the

importance of their faith.

**Teach children to understand what they believe.** It is not enough to memorize prayers and articles of faith.

It's important that parents explain the meaning behind them so children can understand and explain them, too.

Use the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a reference.

Priests and religious are good resources, too.

**Know God's Word.** Encourage daily Scripture reading by giving children personal Bibles and using them together.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do Catholics genuflect before entering a pew?

In medieval Europe, one showed respect for a king or noble by going down on one knee. Today, we genuflect to show respect and reverence for Jesus, our Lord and King, truly present in the Eucharist. In most Catholic churches,



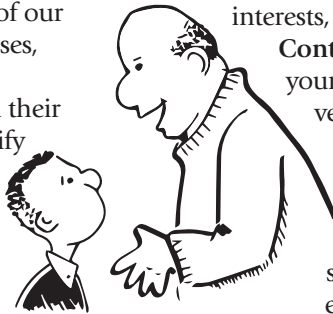
there is a tabernacle in the sanctuary, which contains consecrated hosts from previous Masses. Whenever we cross in front of the tabernacle or enter a pew, we honor Christ by genuflecting on the right knee or making a deep bow.

## Take simple steps toward child safety

As Catholic parents, we are entrusted by God with the well-being of our children. When they are out of our eyesight in school, clubs, sports or friends' houses, simple efforts can keep them safe.

**Stay aware.** Always know what is going on in their lives. Talk to them, hear and observe them. Verify everything. For example, if your child is going to a friend's home to hang out, call first to be sure parents are home and will supervise.

**Connect.** Loving communication will encourage children to trust you and confide



when something is wrong. Watch for changes in behavior, interests, or hygiene and investigate immediately.

**Control access.** Be careful about with whom you allow your children to spend time. Check references and verify the good background of childcare providers. Steer children away from friendships with others who negatively affect their behavior.

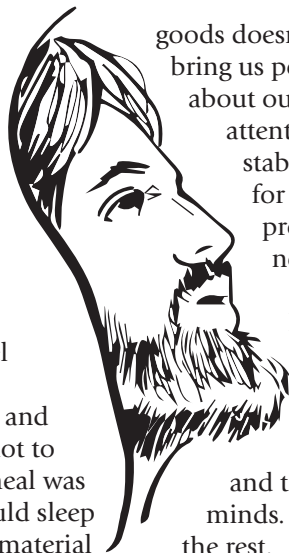
**Tell someone.** If you are concerned that your child may be unsafe, talk to your pediatrician, a school guidance counselor, your priest or someone else with authority to help.

### Scripture LESSON

#### Matthew 6:24-34, Useless worry.

When Jesus became one of us, he didn't choose to live with all the comforts our world could offer. He knew what it was like to be hungry and thirsty, or wonder where he would sleep at night. So when he told us to trust God with everything, he could speak with authority and understand how we would feel when we heard his words.

Jesus wants us to truly listen and follow his words. He told us not to worry about where our next meal was coming from or where we would sleep at night. Rich or poor, having material



goods doesn't make us holy or bring us peace. In fact, worrying about our physical needs draws attention from the inner stability that is so necessary for peace. Only God can provide what we truly need.

**What can a parent do?** Remind your children that worry is a useless activity. When they feel anxious, teach them to ask God for help and then put it out of their minds. God will take care of the rest.

### Parent TALK

My children were fighting constantly. Time-outs momentarily silenced them, but I wanted to teach them to resolve disputes on their own.

I started by setting behavior standards. Top of the list? "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). As God's children, all our actions must come from love.



Second standard – forgiveness. When troubles do arise, we must apologize, forgive, and move on. "Do not let the sun set on your anger" (Ephesians 4:26). Being willing to forgive helps to solve disputes.

Third standard – listen respectfully. I explained that if they wanted to be heard, they had to be good listeners. Good listeners don't interrupt, shout or blame. We brainstormed respectful ways to speak to each other and practiced them.

This is still an ongoing process. My children still argue, but recover quickly. They are developing the skills to be peacemakers when they grow up.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Feb. 2 – Presentation of the Lord.** In accordance with the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to make the prescribed offering after his birth. They were devout Jews, faithful observers of the law of the Lord. It was at the presentation that they met Simeon who warned Mary that a sword of sorrow would pierce her heart (Luke 2:35), referring to the Crucifixion.

**Feb. 4 – St. Jane of Valois (1504).** Briefly a queen of France, St. Jane was married to the Duke of Orleans, who

bitterly resented the forced union. Despite his coldness and disrespect, she remained loyal and patient. When their marriage was annulled, she retired to Bourges and founded the Order of the Annunciation.

**Feb. 22 – Chair of St. Peter.** Marking Jesus' choice of St. Peter to head the Church, this feast marks the endurance of the Holy See through the centuries. On this day, we thank God for his Church and pray for its holy preservation.



#### Our Mission

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